

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 01661 091510Z

44

ACTION LAB-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ABF-01 FS-01 TRSE-00 OES-03 ST-01 SIL-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1934

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, OCON, EFIN, OTRA, OSCI, TS

SUBJ: USE OF U.S. EXCESS DINARS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

REF : STATE 52621, 75 TUNIS 7509

1. REGARDING QUERIES PARA 2 STATE REFTEL, EMBASSY WOULD PREFER NOT APPORACHING TUNIS AIR TO DETERMINE ITS WILLINGNESS ACCEPT U.S.-OWNED DINARS FOR TRAVEL SINCE PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVES ARE AVAILABLE. WE HAVE LEARNED THROUGH EXPERIENCE THAT TUNIS AIR, AS MONOPOLY GOVERNMENT AIRLINE IN TUNISIA, DOES NOT MAKE PARTICULAR EFFORT PROVIDE OPTIMUM SERVICE. FURTHERMORE, TUNIS AIR DOES NOT TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE MAINTAIN OFFICE IN WASHINGTON OR IN SEVERAL OTHER AREAS USEFUL FOR U.S. OFFICIAL TRAVELERS. WE RECOMMEND RELIANCE ON TRIAL BASIS ON ALITALIA WHICH HAS OFFICES IN WASHINGTON AND OTHER WORLD CAPITALS, SERVES PRESENT AUTHORIZED TRANSFER POINT ROME, AND IS WILLING ACCEPT TUNISIAN DINARS FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL FOR ALL U.S. OFFICIAL NEEDS IN CONFORMITY WITH PL-480 SALES AGREEMENTS REGARDLESS OF WHERE TRAVEL ORIGINATES AND TERMINATES AS LONG AS TRAVELERS STOP IN TUNIS. ALITALIA ALSO AGREES TO MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF U.S. CARRIERS ON ALL ROUTES, INCLUDING THOSE SERVED BY ALITALIA. ALITALIA REP BELIEVES THAT ALITALIA WASHINGTON OFFICE WOULD BE PREPARED TO ISSUE TICKETS AGAINST GTR'S ISSUED IN WASHINGTON AND PAYABLE IN DINARS BUT WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF PROCEDURES AND POSSIBLY CONCURRENCE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 TUNIS 01661 091510Z

ALITALIA WASHINGTON OFFICE AND ALITALIA HEADQUARTERS. ALITALIA

INDICATED IT FORESEES NO PARTICULAR RESTRICTIONS AS LONG AS ONLY TRAVEL IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH SPIRIT AND LAW OF GOT-USG BILATERAL AGREEMENTS IS INVOLVED.

2. AS BACKGROUND INFORMATION, ALITALIA REP INFORMED EMBASSY THAT TUNISIAN ARE RAISING INCREASING DIFFICULTIES FOR CONVERSION OF DINARS BY FOREIGN CARRIERS FOR TRAVEL ON ROUTES NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED IN FORMAL CIVIL AVIATION AGREEMENTS OR OPERATING PERMITS. THIS NO PARTICULAR CONCERN TO ALITALIA, HOWEVER, SINCE (UNLIKE TWA) ALITALIA HS HIGH TUNISIAN EXPENSES FOR SERVICING ITS AIRLINE OPERATIONS HERE WHICH CAN BE MET FROM U.S.-OWNED DINARS IN EVENT GOT LIMITS CONVERTIBILITY. ALITALIA WILLINGNESS ACCEPT DINAR PAYMENT BASED IN PART ON FACT IT WILL OBTAIN SALES COMMISSION AND HOPES TO EXPAND ITS TICKET SALES TO U.S. COMMUNITY FOR UNOFFICIAL TRAVEL PAYABLE IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE.

3. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT SPECIFICALLY APPROACHED OTHER AIRLINES, WE BELIEVE THAT SOME, PARTICULARLY THOSE HAVING IMPORTANT EXPENDITURES IN TUNISIA SUCH AS AIR FRANCE, WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT DINAR PAYMENT FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL UNDER SAME CONDITIONS AS ALITALIA. INCIDENTALLY, TWA LOCAL REP STILL BELIEVES HE COULD ACCEPT DINAR PAYMENTS IN TUNIS FOR OFFICIAL U.S. TRAVEL ORIGINATING OUT OF TUNISIA AND THEN INSTRUCT TWA OFFICE CONCERNED TO ISSUE APPROPRIATE TICKETS, BUT HE MAY NOT YET BE INFORMED OF NEW TWA POLICY.

4. EMBASSY GRATIFIED RE PROGRESS IN FORMULATING FY 1976 SFCP PLANS BUT, AS REQUESTED TUNIS 7509, 5199 AND PREVIOUS, WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF THESE PLANS AND OTHER PROPOSED USE OF U.S.-OWNED DINARS BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS MADE.
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